Impenitent SINNERS Warned of their MISERY And Summoned to Judgment.

Delivered in Two *Sermons*: the former on the Sabbath, *Nov.* 6. the other on the Lecture following, *Nov.* 10. 1698.

Occasioned by the Amazing Instance of a Miserable Creature, who stood Co[illegible] for Murdering her Infant [illegible] *Whoredom*. To which are subjo[illegible] Solemn Words spoken to her, on th[illegible] portunities. *Published for the Warning o*[illegible]

By Samuel Willard, Minister of the Gospel, and Teacher of a Church in *Boston*, N.E.

Deut. 17. 13. -- *And all the People shall hear, and fear, and do no more presumptuously.*

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TO THE READER.

Reader;

IF ever there was a time when God ſolemnly calls his Servants to *Cry aloud and not to ſpare, but ſhew his People their tranſgreſſions*, it is now, when *Iniquity ſo abounds and love waxeth ſo cold.* And as the *Philoſopher* once ſaid, that *Evil manners occaſion the making of good Laws*; So the horrid wickedneſs of ſome notorious ſinners, gives occaſion for the Preaching of Sermons more peculiarly ſerviceable for the rowſing and awakning of ſecure ones, and loudly calling them to Repentance; when God toucheth the hearts of his Miniſters, with a feeling ſenſe of the danger of, and tender compaſſion towards

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those that are going without regard in the path of destruction. That which gave birth to the ensuing *SERMONS*, was the prodigious example of a forlorn young Creature, that had defiled her self with Whoredoms, and been the unhappy mother of two illegitimate children successively, and became the barbarous Murderer of the latter of them; for which Crime, she there stood under a sentence of Death, upon due Conviction, and that before she had seen full Nineteen years in the World: and for the which she hath been since righteously executed. My Soul was the more deeply affected with her condition, *partly*, because she belonged to my Flock, and had received the Seal of the Covenant from my hands, and was under my Charge; in which I could not but feel an heart thrilling rebuke in the Holy Providence of God: *Partly* because of the most amazing, and scarce paralel'd induration of heart, and tremendous Wickedness which she discovered in and under her Imprisonment, to the deep consternation of all serious ones that were acquainted therewithall. Which will, I hope, plead sufficiently for the suitableness of the Subjects treated of, and the severity of the Words used in the prosecution of them. *But she is now gone, and hath given up her account to the Judge of all.* Yet her example remains, and stands for the

Warning

Warning of others. And doubtleſs God expects that *the living ſhould lay it to heart*, and learn leſſons of Caution thereby. I have therefore endeavoured, according to the Grace given me, to Level theſe Diſcourſes for the Admonition of others, leaſt they alſo provoke a Sin hating God, to give them up to be more aſtoniſhing Monuments of his righteous ſeverity. And there are, I fear, *more abominations* as great as theſe, which have not yet ſeen the light; and may her example, and theſe warnings drawn forth by it, drive ſuch to a timely Repentance, and making of their peace with God. Let young Ones more eſpecially learn by her, *To Remember their Creator early*, and beware of ſuch ſins as were leading to the bringing of her to a fearful end; in particular let all Children, and ſuch as are under the Command of Parents and Family Government, beware of diſobedience to their Parents, and thoſe that have the Authority over them; let them be warned to take heed to themſelves of being linked in vain company, and take the wiſe mans counſel, Prov. 1. 10. *My Son, if Sinners entice thee conſent thou not.* Let them beware of *prophaning Gods Holy Sabbaths*: of unneceſſary abſenting themſelves from the Worſhip of God in his Houſe, or neglecting of any opportunities of attending on his Holy Ordinances; and let them be adviſed *to keep their feet when they come to the*

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House of God, and not suffer their hearts to wander into the corners of the earth, when they should be learning what God the Lord hath to say unto them. Let them be warned against the neglect of *Secret Prayer, and Meditation*, and be afraid of living content in an *Unregenerate State*, trifling away a day of grace, and putting off calls, and counsels, and the strivings of the Spirit of God with them, as things that may be thought of soon enough, when they have taken their fill of their mad mirth, and glutted themselves with sensual pleasures; all of which Sins that poor Creature acknowledged her self to have been eminently guilty of: Lest, if you be not admonished by her example, an Holy God should be provoked to *leave you up to your own hearts lusts*. Be sure therefore to read in her a confirmation of that truth, *that for these things the Wrath of God cometh on the children of Disobedience*. Let Parents be rouzed up by this to take more care, and use more prudence in maintaining that Authority over their Children, which God hath vested them withal, and beware of an over fond indulgence, in giving them an unrestrained liberty: let it awaken them to lay themselves out with more industry, and constancy, in *training them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord*; in instructing them about the great things of their Souls and Eternity; let it make

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make them more affectionate and importunate in praying with them, and for them; and put them upon the more watchful care over themſelves in their whole converſation, that they ſet no evil examples before them, but write them a copy in their lives of all the counſels & admonitions which they offer to them: fearing leſt, if they by their neglect bring guilt on themſelves, their children ſhould be *forſaken of God*, and prove an *heavineſs to their Parents*, as this fooliſh Child did. May all that *Fear God*, and peculiarly his *Miniſters*, whom the Lord Jeſus Chriſt hath given a ſpecial charge unto, *to feed his Lambs*, be excited hereby to more anxious ſolicitude, and induſtrious endeavours for the Souls of all whom they are concerned withal, and more eſpecially for the Riſing Generation, that they may not become *a ſtubborn and a rebellious Generation, a Generation that ſet not their heart aright, and whoſe ſpirit is not ſtedfaſt with God*: And may the following Sermons be made any way ſerviceable to theſe good ends and purpoſes, God ſhall have the Glory: to whoſe gracious Bleſſing I Commend it, with my moſt hearty Prayers, Who am,

Leſs than the Leaſt of

all Saints.

Samuel Willard.

THE FOLLY and MISERY OF Impenitent Sinners.

PSAL. V. 5.

The fooliſh ſhall not ſtand in thy ſight.

I ſhall not now ſpend time in inquiring after the Occaſion of the penning of this *Pſalm*, or in Analyſing of it. Let it ſuffice to obſerve that *David* in *verſe* 4, 5, 6. repreſents the miſerable condition of wicked men, on the account of the *Holineſs* of God, as it ſtands engaged againſt ſinners for ſin. The ſumm of it is, that God *takes no pleaſure in them*, but *hates & abhors them*, and therefore will not *admit* them into his *favour*, but will bring *deſtruction* on them: and one would think that every word

ſhould be an envenomed arrow in the Heart or Conſcience of the ungodly. Our *Text* is one of thoſe ſhafts taken out of Gods quiver, and ſhot at every unregenerate Soul; and Oh! that they might be throughly wounded by it. The words before us are an aſſertion delivered by the mouth of Truth it ſelf, and may well terrify and amaze every Chriſtleſs Soul. In them we may obſerve two things. 1. The *Subject* ſpoken of, *the fooliſh*: I ſhall not inſiſt on the various uſages of this word in Scriptures; it is ſometimes improved in a good ſenſe; and ſometimes it is made uſe of in a bad ſenſe; and in this latter it is here: and thus it is frequently uſed for a *Fool*, or a *Mad-man*: and therefore many tranſlations read it, *Inſani*; the mad or diſtracted; men that are out of their wits. 2. The *thing aſſerted* concerning theſe, *they ſhall not ſtand in thy ſight.* Hebr. *before thine eyes. i. e.* Gods, for of Him the *Pſalmiſt* is ſpeaking. *Eyes* are aſcribed to God after the manner of men, for he is a Spiritual being, and hath neither ſenſes, nor organs of ſenſe: and the word [Stand] ſignifies to be in *a ſettled Condition*: and it is in the laſt conjugation, which farther intends the ſignification. To ſtand then in Gods ſight, or before his eyes, intends an enjoying of, or being ſettled in his favour. It is a *Metaphor* taken from the favourites of Princes, who are admitted into their preſence, and ſtand before them at all times. And in this negative the contrary affirmative is included, *i. e.* they

ſhall

shall fall before him, and be thrust out of his sight; and it also intends that he cannot bear the sight of them, and will banish them his presence. This may be referred to the present life and time; but hath a more peculiar respect to the great day of Accounts.

Hence,

DOCTRINE.

All impenitent Sinners are foolish and mad, and therefore shall not stand in Gods sight; which will render them extreamly miserable.

There are three Propositions contained in this Doctrine.

Prop. I. *That all impenitent Sinners are foolish and mad.*

There are a sort of persons in the world, whom God in his word, is pleased to put the Character of fools and mad men upon, who are neither naturals, or void of the use of reason, considered as men; nor yet bereft of their understandings, through occasional dotage or frenzy in that respect: and who are they? we have a summary account of them, *Jer.* 4. 22. *My people is foolish, they have not known me, they are sottish Children, and they have no understanding; they are wise to do evil, but to do good they have no knowledge.* The summ

is, *all sinners*, remaining in their natural estate belong to this Character; and hence *Sin* and *Folly* are, in Scripture, terms equivalent. Here we may, in particular, briefly come at this in three steps.

1. *All sin is folly.* And hence so much sin as remains in the Godly, so much foolishness there abides with them. This the Psalmist confesseth of himself, *Psal.* 69 5. *O God, thou knowest my foolishness.* Every time a person commits any sin, he hath just reason to say of himself, as he, 1 *Sam.* 26. 21. *I have sinned, I have played the fool, and have erred exceedingly.* And it must needs be so, for every sin is an act of disobedience to that God, on whom we have our entire dependence, and to whom we owe our selves and our whole lives: it is an act of rebellion against that God whom we are bound to subject our selves unto, and is able to destroy us for that rebellion. It is a *forsaking the fountain of living waters, and digging of broken Cisterns that can hold no water.* Jer. 2. 13. It is a *preferring of lying vanities before everlasting Mercies.* Jer. 2. 8. It is a *provoking of God to jealousy.* 1 Cor. 10. 22. And we are not stronger than he. It is an entring of the lists of contention with him, *a running upon him, even his neck, on the thick bosses of his buckler,* Job. 15. 26. It is for a worm to bid a challenge to Omnipotency it self: yea, what shall I say? there are uncountable follies attend the commission of every sin; and no wisdom at all.

2. That

2. *That hence all they that are under the Dominion of Sin, are egregious fools.* There is folly cleaving to the best of Gods Children here, so long as they have a body of death to carry about with them; and it shews it self in every stirring of the corrupt part: but yet they have the principles of the true wisdom in them; they are such as are made wise to Salvation. But as for those in whom there are no seeds of saving Grace sown, but they yet remain in their natural estate, folly is bound up in their hearts, & they have no other principle in them. As to their *Understandings*, they are foolish and perverse, they *call evil good, and good evil.* Isai. 5. 20. As to their *Wills* and *Affections*, they are engaged. Eccl. 8. 11. *The heart of the sons of men is fully set in them to do evil.* They do nothing at all with a sincere aim at the glory of God, and the furtherance of their own salvation: yea, their whole life is a continual progress in the way that leads to destruction; hence we have that put into their description, *Rom.* 3. 16, 17. *Destruction and misery are in their ways: and the way of Peace have they not known.*

3. *That Impenitent Sinners are the greatest fools of all.* The Word of God often useth these words [*Sinners, Fools, Wicked*] emphatically, for such as are peculiarly so: and then it intends either, (1.) Such as live in most notorious and prodigious sins; thus a common Whore is called a Sinner more than once in the Gospel: or (2.) Such as remain obstinate and impenitent in their

Sins under, and notwithstanding means used to win them to repentance. Now the means used with them are of two sorts. (1.) Such as are afforded to the Gentiles, who have not the Gospel, *viz.* the light of a natural Conscience, and the common strivings of the Spirit of God in them; they are therefore said to be a *Law to themselves, and their Consciences to bear witness, and either to accuse or excuse*, *Rom.* 2. 14, 15. and the Providences of God, which ought to be improved by that light, to excite them to repentance: thus the *Goodness of God* is said to *lead to it*, *Rom.* 2. 4. and his common benefits are called *witnesses*, *Acts* 14. 17. *his Judgments* also are *that the Inhabitants of the World may learn righteousness*, Isa. 26. 9. (2.) Such as those enjoy who sit under the means of Grace, wherein God shews them the evil and danger of their sins, and not only invites them to Repentance, but also gives them all suitable directions, and the greatest imaginable encouragements to help them in it; and these are afforded to such as are in the Covenant with him, Psal. 147. 19, 20. *he sheweth his word to Jacob, his Statutes and judgments to Israel: he hath not dealt so with any nation.* Impenitence in the former of these is a note of inexcusable folly; and so it is charged on their *foolish minds*, *Rom.* 1. 21. how much more then may it be imputed to the latter, and their folly be reputed the *Paroxism* of madness? inasmuch as they have a price in their hands, and have not an heart to make use of it; and whence is that, but because

they

they are fools; according to, Prov. 17. 16. *Wherefore is there a price in the hands of a fool to get wisdom, seeing he hath no heart to it?* they have life and death set before them, and they chuse death; they have the way to escape the Wrath of God, and obtain Eternal Life, and regard it not; they are told whither their sinful courses do lead, and where they will end, and yet they will take no warnings, but run wilfully and violently on to their own destruction, like that fool, Prov. 7. 22, 23. *he goeth after her straitway, as the ox goeth to the slaughter, and as a fool to the correction of the Stocks, till a dart strike through his liver, as a bird hasteth to the snare, and knoweth not that it is for his life*; they are invited and entreated to be reconciled unto God, and to put away their sins by repentance, and they mind it not, but stop their ears, and harden their hearts, & turn their backs; they have a day of visitation, in which the *things of their peace* are set before them, and *do not know it*; they see others of their fellow sinners cut off by Gods awful Judgments, and it makes no impression upon them: yea, they themselves are brought to sorrow and shame; and still they will not be reclaimed: and were not *madness in their heart*, could they do so?

Prop. II. *That therefore such Sinners shall not stand in the sight of God.*

Could that *Philistian* Prince say, 1 Sam. 21. 14,

15. *the man is mad, wherefore then have ye brought him to me? have I need of mad men?* &c. and will not God declare as much concerning these? yea, he hath said it, Text. Here two things.

1. That no such as these shall stand in Gods sight. That this is so, our *Text* fully asserts, and many other parallel *Scriptures* confirm. All that lies before us at present, is to consider what is implied in this. The words are a threatning, and indeed a very awful one, as will presently appear. Here then let it be observed, that the expression may refer either to the time present, or that which is to come.

1. With respect to the time present; and then it intends that God will cut short their lives, and hurry them out of the World before they should have died, according to the ordinary course of nature; hence we read, Psal. 55. 23. *bloody and deceitful men shall not live out half their days*; and Eccles. 7 17. *be not wicked overmuch, why shouldst thou dy before the time?* It is a common favour which God allows to men as he sees meet, to spare them, and let them fill up their number of dayes; whereas such fools have reason to expect to be debarred of this priviledge, and posted away before hand. But I insist not here, though this also affords matter of awful consideration.

2. With respect to the time to come: and then to stand in Gods sight, intends to enjoy his special favour and love, and we have this infelicity expounded in *Isa.* 27. 11, and there are two seasons wherein

wherein they shall be debarred of this favour.

1. In the day of Judgment. In some sense all must stand before him then; *i.e.* all shall be cited to make their personal appearance before God, and receive their doom; but by standing then, we are to understand their being *acquitted* and *accepted*, and *acknowledged* by him as his Redeemed; these only are said to stand then; whereas these fools shall fall before the Judge; they shall be utterly disclaimed by him, he will say to them, *Depart, I know you not*, Mat. 7. 23. they shall be condemned and have a sentence of death pronounced on them, Mat. 25. 41. *Depart ye cursed*, and in this respect it is said, Psal. 1. 5. *the ungodly shall not stand in the Judgment.*

2. In the Eternal Kingdom; into which the righteous shall be received, and partake in the Everlasting *Vision of God*, these shall then be excluded, Mat. 8. 12. *The Children of the Kingdom shall be cast out into outer darkness.* We observed that the word signifies, *A Settled Condition*: Heaven is the Godly mans Inheritance, and when he comes there, he shall settle to remove no more; but there is no settlement for these, but an everlasting exclusion from the presence of God, which is a punishment ordained for them, 2 *Thes.* 1. 9. they shall never have one look of pitty or compassion from God any more for ever.

2. That the reason of this is, because they are such fools, this will appear, if we consider,

1. That all men are foolish in their Natural Estate,

state, it is bred in, and born with them; it is the Wise mans observation, in Prov. 22. 15. *foolishness is bound up in the heart of a Child*, and we have it more distinctly set forth in, Psal. 58. 3, 4, 5. *The wicked are estranged from the womb, they go astray as soon as they be born, speaking lies.* Ignorance of God, and alienation from him is rooted in the hearts of all the posterity of sinful *Adam*, and the Apostle giveth us a true account how it is with every natural man, before regenerating Grace hath renewed him, Eph. 4. 18. *having the understanding darkned, being alienated from the life of God through the ignorance that is in them, because of the blindness of their heart.*

2. That yet there are a great many of these that shall stand in Gods sight. God hath not *left* this foolish and sinful race without all *hope*. The Doctrine before us, is not to drive the wretched children of men to *despair*. There have been such as have added to their natural folly, prodigious wickednesses, whereby they have expressed the height of their madness, who yet notwithstanding have been made partakers in this grace, to be heavens favourites, and taken near unto God, and entituled to all the Glories of his Kingdom, what saith the Apostle? 1 Cor. 6. 9, 10, 11. *Neither Fornicators, &c. shall inherit the Kingdom of God, and such were some of you, but ye are washed, &c.* and he puts himself in the number, in that declaration of his, Tit. 3. 3. *for we our selves also were*

were sometime foolish, disobedient, deceived, serving of divers lusts and pleasures, &c.

3. That in order to this they must be made wise. Though God saves such as have been foolish, yet he doth not save them *in* their folly, but *from* it. God hates sin, and it is his holy and pure nature that is displayed in his so doing, as Hab. 1. 13. *thou art of purer eyes than to behold evil, and canst not look on iniquity.* There must therefore be a change wrought in them, they must be cured of this distemper, in order to their obtaining of this priviledge, though God be *Gracious*, yet he is *Holy*; and will not baulk this *Holiness* of his, but display it in the application of his grace to sinful men. There must therefore a work of Sanctification pass upon them, in which Sin must be subdued, and grace must be implanted in them.

4. That God offers this wisdom to all that live under the Gospel, and invites them to seek to him for it. Herein God shews his good will to such, in that he hath told them wherein the true wisdom consists, Job 28. 28. *to man he saith, the fear of God, that is wisdom, and to depart from evil is understanding*; and hath pointed them to know where it is treasured, *viz.* in *Christ*, Col. 2. 3. *in whom are hid all the treasures of wisdom & knowledge*, bids them come to him for it, and encourageth them so to do, Jam. 1. 5. *if any of you lack wisdom, let him ask it of God, that giveth to all men liberally and upbraideth not, and it shall be given him*

him; yea, and expostulates with sinners about their refusing of it, as one that is grieved, Prov. 1. 22. *how long ye simple ones, will ye love simplicity? and ye scorners delight in their scorning, and fools hate knowledge?*

5. Hence it is by their impenitency that Sinners procure this to themselves. If they would have hearkened to Gods voice, and received instruction, it had not been so: but because they have hardened their hearts against all Counsel, and would not receive his reproofs, though he followed them with repeated cries and calls, and tried all courses with them unto wonderful long suffering, he therefore puts them out of his sight, and they shall fall before his judgment; hitherto therefore God reduceth the reason, and lays the charge on which the threatning is built; Prov. 1, 24, &c. *because I have called, and ye refused, &c. I will also laugh at your calamity; I will mock when your fear cometh, &c.*

Prop. III. *That this will render them extreamly miserable.*

The *Psalmist* is here setting forth the miserable state of Impenitent Sinners; and the summe of all infelicity is contained in this very thing. Observe therefore;

1. That it is a woful infelicity for a Sinner to be every day exposed to destruction, to have the Wrath of God continually impending over him,

to

to be in the ſtate mentioned, Pſal. 7. 11. *God is angry with the wicked every day*; to have the Arm of Divine Vengeance up, with the glittering Sword of revenging Juſtice, ready to give him the deadly ſtroak; to have nothing before him but a fearful expectation of fiery indignation which ſhall devour him, when it lights upon him; in the fulneſs of his ſtrength and folly, to fall upon him, and ſend him down to the pit of endleſs miſery; ſuch is the condition of impenitent ſinners at the beſt; read at leiſure, Job 18. 5. to end, and you ſhall find it there aſtoniſhingly deſcribed, and ſee 1 Theſ. 5. 3. *when they ſhall ſay, peace and ſafety, then ſudden deſtruction cometh upon them, as travail upon a woman with child, and they ſhall not eſcape.*

2. Their condition muſt needs be fearful who ſhall fall before God in the judgment: who ſhall not be able to ſtand, when they ſhall appear before him in the great and terrible day. It is a dreadful thing to ſtand at an Humane Bar, and to have ſentence of death pronounced upon one by the Judge; it fills the by ſtanders with conſternation, and what horror hath ſeized ſuch as have been under it? What ſhrieks, and cries have they uttered! what will it then be when the Judge of all the Earth ſhall ſay to the man, as Mat. 21. 41. *Depart thou curſed into everlaſting fire, prepared for the Devil and his Angels.* Which Sentence will be immediately followed with as terrible an Execution? and yet ſuch is the portion of Impenitent Sinners.

3. That

3. That to lose the sight and favour of God for ever, is the quintessence of everlasting miseries; what saith the Psalmist, Psal 30. 5. *in thy favour is life.* 63. 3. *thy loving kindness is better than life.* 16. ult. *in thy presence is fulness of joys*; and the Apostle thought he had backed his Exhortation with a most potent argument in, Heb. 12. 14. *follow after Holiness, without which no man shall see God*; *in his light* only can we *see light*; and there is nothing but *outer darkness* out of it; he that loseth God, loseth all: there is nothing but destruction that accompanieth this exclusion, Hos. 9. 12. *Wo to them when I depart from them*, they fall under Gods indignation; and we are told, Psal. 11. 6. *upon the wicked he shall rain snares, fire and brimstone, and an horrible tempest*; *this shall be the portion of their cup*; how miserable then must these forlorn creatures needs be!

USE 1.

Learn hence the grievous folly of those that embolden themselves in sin, on presumption of Gods mercy. The truth is, the foolishness of Impenitency in nothing appears more, than in the arguings by which men strengthen themselves in it: and among these, I know none more amazing, than the delusion of a false hope in mercy; notwithstanding men persist in iniquity and refuse to return, this is that which God complains of, Psal. 50. 21. *these things thou hast done,*

and I kept silence: thou thoughtest that I was altogether such an one as thy self. And the Prophet urgeth it on them, Jer. 7. 9, 10. *Will you steal, murder, commit adultery, &c. and come and stand, &c. and say, we are delivered to do all these abominations?* As if God had no other way to shew himself merciful, but by saving sinners in their sins; whereas we are told that Christs great design is to *save them from their sins*, *Matth.* 1. 21. Hence we have God using that *Sarcasm*, Isa. 27. 4. *Fury is not in me: who would set the briars and thorns against me in battel? I would go through them, I would burn them together*: and drawing up that sentence, verse 11. *It is a people of no understanding: therefore he that made them will not have mercy on them, and he that formed them, will shew them no favour.* But men forget that God hath a revenging Justice to glorify in the *Obstinate*, as well as Mercy on the *Penitent*: and whiles men thus nourish a vain hope, to gratify their own lusts, they lose the Opportunity of mercy, and lay up treasures of wrath; than which what madness can be more pernicious?

USE II.

Let it then be a word of warning and terrour to Impenitent Sinners under the Gospel, & I know none that carries more of dread in it, if well understood and believed, let all such then consider,

1. You are all foolish in your natural estate. Whatever vain opinion you have of your own wisdom,

wisdom, which is indeed but an indication of your folly, according to, Prov. 26. 16. *the slugard is wiser in his own conceit, than seven men that can render a reason*; yet this is a great truth of all men as they come into the world in their natural estate, Job 11. 12. *vain man would be wise, though man be born like a wild asses colt.* The wise man gives in the true character of every Child of *Adam*, as he is in himself, from the beginning to the end, Eccles. 9. 3 *the heart of the sons of men is full of evil, and madness is in their heart while they live, and after that they go to the Dead.*

2. If you live and dy such, you shall never stand in Gods sight; your doom is determined and pronounced: and you have the reason given in the words following our Text, *thou hatest all the workers of Iniquity.* And if God hates you you have reason to expect that he will separate you from his presence. You have a fearful account given you, of the condition of those who add Impenitency to Iniquity, Psal. 7. 12, &c. *if he turn not, he will whet his sword; he hath bent his bow, and made it ready,* &c.

3. God affords you the means of grace as a remedy to cure you of your foolishness: The great design of the Gospel and Ordinances is to shew men the right way, to recover of their madness, and be made wise. This is the usefulness of the word of God, 2 Tim. 3. 15. *the Holy Scriptures, which are able to make thee wise unto Salvation*

the

they that have them not muſt needs *dy without knowledge*, it is the main deſign of the means to point us to this; God gives *Paſtors to feed men with knowledge and underſtanding*, Jer. 3. 15. What he ſaith of his *Proverbs*, may be applyed to the whole book of God, *Prov.* 2. 3, 4. *To know wiſdom, and inſtruction*, &c.

4. If you periſh in your impenitency under theſe means, you will never be cured. Sinners, by their hardneſs of heart, withſtand the efficacy of the Word and Ordinances; and when once it comes to that, that ſinners do practically ſay, as they did expreſsly, Jer. 44. 16. *As to the word which thou ſpeakeſt to us in the name of the Lord, we will not hearken unto thee*; their caſe is next to deſperate We have God therefore expoſtulating with ſuch, Pſal. 94. 8. *Ye fools, when will you be wiſe?* Theſe are the only means which God hath appointed to bring ſinners to their right minds; and if the operation be contrary, it argues their caſe to be deplorable. Hence that complaint of our Saviour, Math. 23. 37, 38. *Jeruſalem*, &c. *how often would I have gathered*, &c. *but ye would not: therefore is your houſe left unto you deſolate.*

5. However you now deſpiſe inſtruction, yet you will mourn for it at laſt. It will be a dreadful thing to loſe Gods preſence for ever, though now you can ſay unto him *depart*, yet when it comes to be your lot indeed to loſe all your hope of his favour, this will be unconceivable bitterneſs:

ness: and nothing will make it more bitter than to think, I had a day of Grace, wisdom himself pleaded with me, stretched out his hands all the day long to me; I heard the precious truths of the Gospel, I was told of my miserable state, entreated to consider of it, offered help out of it, was waited upon with line upon line, striven with both by Parents, and Godly friends, and faithful Ministers, and by the Spirit himself together with them: I was told what it would come to; and yet I despised, I scorned, I would have mine own ways, and grew the more resolute in them: and now I am but *filled with my own devices, and made to eat of the fruit of my own ways*: and how dreadful an eccho of Conscience will this be? and yet we are told that thus it will be in the end, *Prov.* 5. 11. &c. *and thou mourn at last*, &c. *and say, how have I hated instruction, and my heart despised reproof?* &c.

6. Hence think what a doom is hastning upon you, and what an execution will follow that. You must very shortly appear before God; your day of Grace will soon be at an end; the time is drawing near when God will say that his Spirit shall strive no more with you; the *ax* which *lyeth at the root* all this while, will *cut you down*, you must hear your terrible Judge say, *depart from me, I know thee not, thou worker of iniquity*: and when that word is once past, the sentence will take place. And whither must you go, when you depart from him, but to *everlasting burnings*? to the

the *worm that dyes not, to the fire that is not quenched*, to eternal torments, to dwell with the Devils and damned, and feel the endless impressions of the fury of a provoked God? and *can your hearts endure?* let these terrours of the Lord work on your hearts and perswade them.

And to that end,

1. Be convinced of your folly and madness. As long as you are wise in your own esteem, there is no hope that ever you should be so indeed; or so much as comply with the means that are made use of to render you so; it is the remark in Prov. 26. 12. *Seest thou a man that is wise in his own conceit? there is more hope of a fool than of him.* *Conversion* begins at *Conviction*; and men are led to that Conviction by *Consideration*, as, Ezek. 18. 28. *Because he considereth, and turneth away from his transgressions*, &c. And think how unreasonable a thing it is to chuse Sin before Holiness, to prefer unprofitable vanities, before the glories of the everlasting Kingdom: to gratify your lusts, and undoe your Souls; for a few moments pleasure, in the gratification of the senses, to suffer eternal separation from God, and the fearful impressions of his insupportable wrath.

2. Deeply resent your danger. Think it not a small and inconsiderable thing to lose Gods gracious presence; and take heed of counting it a light matter to be thrust out of it, after all the offers of it that have been made to you, and advantages that have been put into your hands to

gain it, and the importunate entreaties with which it hath been urged upon you, have been neglected, and despised by you. Yea, *solemnly* consider, that you can in nothing more *dishonour* God, or *provoke* him to hasten your wo day, and speedily to put you out of his sight at the farthest distance, than by *hardning* of your *hearts* against all his calls and warnings.

3. Be often pondering what a God you have to do withall. *He is a great and a terrible God*; if you lose his favour, and procure his anger to burn upon you, you will certainly fall before it. What saith he? Psal. 76. 7. *Thou, even thou art to be feared; and who may stand in thy sight when once thou art angry? He is an holy God*; he hates, and is resolved signally to testify his displeasure at sin; and wo to those that must be made the monuments of that displeasure of his, better had it been for them, *if they had never been born.* He is a *Just God*, and he will not suffer the righteousness of his Law to fail; and if bold sinners will thrust themselves upon the swords point, they shall feel the smart of it, to their confusion. He is a *True God*, and faithful to his threatnings as well as to his promises, and if he hath said, that the *foolish shall not stand in his sight*, let all impenitent sinners look to themselves, for they shall find that the *Strength of Israel is not a man that he should lye, or a son of man, that he should repent.*

4. Let the consideration of all this make you hasty, and in earnest to fly to God for his *Spirit* and

and *Grace* to make you wise. This is the right improvement that sinners ought to make of the *Terrours of the Lord*; it should make them afraid of the wrath of God, and put them into trembling at the apprehension of their danger; and by this fear to be stimulated to an uneasiness and restlessness in their present condition, and cause them to cry aloud to God, for his pitty and help, and by his Holy Spirit to work in them that great Change by which they may be turned from folly to wisdom, *from darkness to his marvelous light, from sin to God.* And let the dread of such a misery as this separation will certainly produce, be a spur to quicken you to make no more delays, lest whiles you dispise the mercy offered, and trifle away a precious day of Grace which you enjoy, you pull down vengeance on your own heads, &c. be put beyond hope for ever.

5. And to make you the more earnest, look on, and take warning by every awful monument of Gods displeasure on this account. There are those Judgments of his in the World, which he designs to be exemplary, for the rousing up of secure sinners, and terrifying of them under the apprehension of his *Holiness* therein displayed. When any are left by God to themselves, and by their own naughtiness run themselves upon the sword of civil Justice, and must be cut off by it, God would have *all Israel to hear, and fear, and do no more so presumptuously.* Such an one we have now, in the Providence of God set before us; and the

Lord give us all the Grace to learn by it, and let young ones in a special manner, and more peculiarly, such as are in their sins, and leading a course, possibly as vile and abominable as that was which led her into this snare; take warning from this, and let it be a solemn admonition to you: let her *History* be your *Caution*, lest God be provoked to make you an *History* too.

And now let me direct my speech to her, but let all sinners in the Congregation take warning by it, and not look upon themselves unconcerned. Let me then say unto you, that your own sin hath found you out, and God hath made you a Spectacle to the world, of his righteous indignation. Your life is forfeited as to man; you are made a *Curse*, and may not be suffered to live, but must be *Cut off*, lest otherwise the Judgments of God should fall upon the land. But still *there is hope in Israel concerning this thing*, with regard to your poor immortal Soul; though you must *flee to the pit, and no man may stay you*; yet Sovereign Grace can say of you, as, *Job* 33. 24. *Deliver her from going down to the pit, I have found a ransom*: only know and be assured, that if ever you be *Saved*, you must be *Converted*; and in order to your being Converted, you must be *Humbled*. And for your help, I have five things to advise you about; and do you look up unto God, that you may be enabled solemnly to entertain them.

I. Think

1. Think what an egregious fool you have been; if ever God shew you mercy, he will imprint this thought on your heart very deep. Remember then, you were born and brought up in a *Land of Uprightness*, in the *Valley of Vision*, where Christ and Salvation by him hath been published. You were admitted in your Childhood to partake in the priviledges of the *Gospel Covenant*; & have been by *Baptism* Sealed to the Service of God, and devoted to be for him and no other. You have doubtless had many private warnings and counsels given you by your Parents, and Kindred, and Godly Neighbours. You have sat under the clear Dispensations of the Word of God, in which you have been many a time over, told of your sinful courses, and the certain destruction that they would lead you to, if you held on in them, and been solemnly advised to *break off your sins by repentance*; and all arguments have been used with you to perswade you of the necessity and happiness of your so doing. You have seen and heard of the falls of others, and of the misery which they brought themselves into thereby. You have been your self left by God to fall into scandalous sins, and warned thereby to beware and not to go on, lest some worse thing should befal you; and yet how have you *despised instruction*, & scorned reproofs, and more desperately resolved in your own ways and courses, until the holy God was provoked to leave you up to your self, and withhold his restraining grace from you, and so suffer

you, by your unaccountable madness, to lay your self open to the Sword of Justice, and you must now dye, as one *that would not be instructed*; and you may well reflect on that expostulation, and think, that you hear God so saying to you, Jer. 2. 17. *hast thou not procured this to thy self, in that thou hast forsaken the Lord thy God, when he led thee by the way?* Cry out then bitterly of this your own foolishness.

2. Be convinced of the amazing danger which you have exposed your self to, by your fearful *hardness of heart*; and tremble to think, that this hardness that you are under the power of, may be *Judicial*. I am sure it is so sometimes, in Gods righteous judgment, with such as God hath spoken to, used many endeavours with, but they would not receive his advice: *affected hardness* is very often punished in this life, with *inflicted hardness*; as Psal. 81. 11, 12. *my people would not hearken to my voice, and Israel would none of me. So I gave them up to their own hearts lusts, and they walked in their own counsels*; and what more fearful plague can befal any soul on this side of Hell? Had not your heart been dreadful hardned, would you not have taken warning by the first fall which God left you to, to have avoided evermore exposing of your self to such another; nay, would it not have driven you to have sought unto God for grace to prevent you, and for forgiveness and peace through the blood of Christ? Had not your heart been desperately obdurate, would you,

you, when by your moſt egregious wickedneſs, you had again fallen into your former ſin, have run your ſelf over ſuch a precipice as this, to expoſe your ſelf, by adding of Murder to Whoredoms, to have your life taken away from you by the Hand of Juſtice; but rather have ſought your peace with God? Had not your heart been harder than an Adamant, would not the horridneſs of that Sin of Murder, which without all reaſon, and by an unaccountable deſperateneſs you precipitated your ſelf into, have made you to relent? whereas inſtead of diſcovering a *broken heart, and a contrite ſpirit*, upon a reflection on it, your whole carriage both before and at your Trial, and at the very pronouncing of a Sentence of Death upon you, hath been ſuch, and ſo ſtupendous, as hath put a grief of heart, into all that fear God, who have either ſeen it, or heard of it; & what do you think this Impenitency will lead to at length, if God do not graciouſly heal you of it?

3. See what a little time you have left you, and how ſoon your caſe will be determined for Eternity. I know, that there is never a bold and ſecure Sinner in the Congregation, who can tell but that he may be Cited before Gods Tribunal, ſooner than you ſhall, and had therefore need to ſee to his own concern: But this you know, that you are dead in the Law, and may every day expect to have the Warrant Signed, and warning given you to go to Execution. Well; bethink

your

your self; no more opportunity for the securing your Souls Eternal Welfare is before you. When once you are dead, you are fixed unchangeably; if your peace be not made before then, you are gone for ever: And Oh, what a great work have you to do in a little time? and the Lord knows whether at present it be so much as begun in you; yea, there are fearful tokens that it is not. Oh that this pungent word may, by his grace give a forcible stroak unto it.

4. Suitably repent of all your follies in particular. Repentance and Pardon are inseparable; & you are told who it is that hath the dispensation of both, *viz. Christ*: Acts 5. 31. *him hath God exalted with his Right-hand, to be a Prince and a Saviour, to give repentance to Israel, and forgiveness of sins*; and be sure to seek to him for it, as you hope to obtain it; let all the obstinacy and hardness of heart which you have laboured of, be exceeding bitter to you, call all your sins to remembrance, and let every one of them be confessed & bewailed apart; and more peculiarly those sins that have brought you to this, your pride, your disobedience to your Parents, your impatience of Family Government, your company keeping, your Whoredoms, and your despising of Christ, who hath offered himself to you; and let all this lead you to the fountain of Iniquity, to the source or original of all abominations, and make you to confess with *David*, Psal. 51. 5. *behold I was shapen in iniquity, and in sin did my mother conceive me.*

Beware

Beware of hiding, excusing, extenuating, falsely denying of any thing, wherein the Glory of God is concerned: what said he to *Achan*, when Gods Providence had discovered him, Josh 7. 19. *My son, give glory to the Lord God of Israel, & make confession to him*; and be sure to pour out your heart before God, with the most aggravating acknowledgments, in all the circumstances, with deepest self loathings and hatred of your sins, utterly renouncing of them; remember what is said, Prov. 28. 13. *he that covereth his sins shall not prosper, but whoso confesseth and forsaketh shall have mercy.*

5. Now humbly betake your self to the blood of sprinkling; come to the fountain opened, to be washed in; there is enough in the blood of Christ for your pardon and healing, 1 Joh. 1. 7. *the blood of Christ cleanseth from all sin*; there was not vertue in him to save such an one as you are, for we are assured, Heb. 7. 25. *he is able to save to the uttermost.* 1 Tim. 1. 15. *Jesus Christ came to save sinners, of whom I am chief.* Isa 1. 18 *though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be white as snow; though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool.* There have as great sinners as you, sought mercy, and found it. God can be just, and yet forgive your sin; he can get himself a name, and exalt the glory of his grace, in you; he can make those falls of yours to be the occasions of his appearing in his grace the more eminently to you, in his humbling, healing, and pardoning of you;

and

and so making it to appear in you, how much more that can do for the saving of a Soul, than a vile hardned sinner can do for her own undoing. Only beware of cheating your self by any fond presumptions of mercy, though you live in your Impenitence, or of supposing that you can comply with the terms of peace in your own strength: but carefully spend the residue of your little time, in lying prostrate at the footstool of the throne of Soveraign Grace, looking up to him, who hath mercy on whom he will have mercy; and with repeated earnestness cease not to offer up that petition to him, while you have any breath left in you, Psal. 25. 11. *For thy name sake, Oh Lord, pardon mine Iniquity, for it is great.*

A Citation TO Judgment after DEATH.

Hebr. IX. 27.

..... *And after this the Judgment.*

THIS Verſe is the *protaſis* of a compariſon which the *Apoſtle* makes uſe of in his Diſcourſe; which needs not for the preſent be inſiſted on, or laid open, in as much as we have now to do but with the general Doctrine contained in the words themſelves. Among all thoſe things which men are invited to the ſerious contemplation of, there are none that

that carry more of solemnity in them, than those of *Death* and *Judgment*: because the former of these puts an end to mans life and time, and opportunities; and the other disposeth them to an Everlasting and Unchangeable Estate. Death it self is stiled a *King of Terrours* in the Holy Scriptures; and the *Philosopher* could call it, [*TON PHOBERON PHOBERATATON*] *of fearful things, the most fearful*; but that which adds to the tremendoulnes of it, is that it is a passage to the great and last Judgment, which the ignorant *Gentiles* had but dark notice of; but is evidently manifested in the Word of God, which we *Christians* are favoured withal. The verse before us, gives us an intimation of both these, and of the certainty of them, as things which are appointed. The word [*appointed*] signifies both a *designation*, & a *reservation* of a thing: notifying that, as there is an Eternal purpose for it in the Decree of God, so it is his fixt and unchangeable will that it shall so be; and accordingly all men are reserved for it. It is the latter of these Statutes then that I am now to treat of, though with that respect as it is consequent upon the former. In the words then, there are three things to be observed:

(1.) A Statute for the Judgment is asserted; and thereby we are assured that it shall be without fail; for the appointment mentioned in the beginning of the *verse* hath reference to this as well as to death; and this is the first and most proper signification of the word.

(2)

(2.) The time when it ſhall be, *after* that men dy. And although we are not told how ſoon it ſhall be after, yet we have Scripture warrant to conclude, that every ones perſonal Judgment will follow preſently upon it ; though the great and general Judgment is reſerved until the conſummation of all things, as will be farther obſerved anon.

(3.) The ſubjects of it, or who they are on whom this Judgment ſhall paſs ; *men*, indefinitely expreſſed ; it intends all men : this Judgment is as extenſive as Death ; yea there have been, & will be ſome exceptions from the general Rule about Death, who have been tranſlated, or ſhall be changed ; but even theſe alſo ſhall come to the Judgment.

Hence,

DOCTRINE.

A certain Death ſhall be followed with as certain a Judgment. It is every whit as certain that men ſhall come unto Judgment, as that they ſhall Dye.

That every one muſt dy ſooner or later, is an acknowledged truth by all, and proved by univerſal experience: though, Oh how few do improve it to good purpoſe? And a reaſon why this truth hath no more proper or ſuitable impreſſions on mens minds, may be becauſe, either they believe not, or put from them the thoughts of

the

the enſuing account which they ſhall be called unto, and look no further than the Grave, where they think there will be an end of them, which muſt needs make them unconcerned for that which comes after. But here we are led into the contemplation of a more awful truth, which is no leſs real, though not ſo obvious to the ſenſes. I ſhall not at preſent enter upon any diſtinct or methodical diſcourſe about this matter, but only make ſome curſory glances on it. There are therefore three or four brief *Obſervations* which I ſhall make on this truth, to make it practicable.

I. That there is a *future Judgment* to which all reaſonable Creatures ſhall be called. How far the Doctrine of a future Judgment hath been entertained by the light of nature, in the Conſciences of men acted by humane reaſon, without the help of Scripture revelation, I ſhall not now enquire. But that it is an Article of faith, commended to us by the infallible Oracles of that God who cannot ly, or be miſtaken, is written with Sun beams in his word. Read for this, Eccleſ. 12. 14. *God will bring every work into Judgment with every ſecret thing, whether it be good or evil.* Acts 17. 31. *he hath appointed a day in which he will Judge the World in righteouſneſs, by the man whom he hath appointed.* 2 Cor. 5. 10. *we muſt all appear before the Judgment Seat of Chriſt, that every one may receive the things done in the body*; and we have a deſcription of it given

given to us by *Christ* himself, in *Math.* 25. 33, *to end.* And it must needs be so, for, there is a *special Government* of God, to be acknowledged, in the managment whereof he will bring all reasonable Creatures to an everlasting state of happiness or misery, according to their Obedience or Disobedience to the Law of that Government, in prosecution whereof he will display the Glory of his *Justice* and *Grace.* God deals with his Creatures in his Government, according to the nature which he saw meet to bestow on them in their Creation. Now when God Created man, he made him a reasonable Creature, and thereby capable of being treated in the way of a Covenant, by precepts and promises, and threatnings; according unto which capacity, he gave him a Command, and required his obedience to it; promised him a reward of life, in case of his performing of perfect Obedience thereunto; denouncing Death against him in case he should disobey. He hath also, upon mans *Apostasy* by which he fell under a Curse of *Death*, revealed to him *a new and a living way* for his recovery out of that misery into which he was plunged; and hath treated some of that race with a *Covenant of Grace*, in which he hath promised them life upon their compliance with it, and menaced them with damnation, yea *double damnation*, on their neglect of it. All these things are abundantly testified to in the Word of God: Now men are, according to their behaviour, with respect to this discovery

which God hath made of himself to man, and obligation which he hath laid him under, disposed of everlastingly: In order unto which they are to pass under a *Trial*. Where there is a Law given to reasonable Creatures, established with Sanctions, there must needs be a Judgment, in which their relation thereto is to be examined, and a retribution made to them accordingly. Either they have complied with the *Rule* given to them, and are to receive a reward of life; or they have revolted therefrom, & have not sought and made their peace, according to the tenour of the Covenant of Grace; and then they must receive the wages of sin, which is death, as we are told, Rom. 6. 23. *The wages of sin is death.* He therefore that acknowledgeth a Government of God over rational beings, must needs believe that there shall be a Judgment, or a time of Trial and Recompences.

II. That this Judgment is after Death; this is the order that it is manifestly put in, *Text.* That there are many awful and stupendous *Judgments* that God brings upon men in this world, is not to be denied; in which he declares his Holiness and just Indignation at sin; and hence we are told, Psal. 9. 14. *The Lord is known by the Judgment that he executeth.* There is also a Court which God hath set up in mens *Consciences*, at which Bar they are sometimes solemnly tried, and being there convicted of breaking the Holy Law of God, &

lying

laying themselves open to the vengeance therein threatned, they are filled with horrors. But it is another Judgment whereof we are now considering, in which men are to appear before God, and receive from him their final doom, which, when it is once past, shall be immediately put in Execution. Now this men come not to in this life, but after they are dead; so that death is not, as too many vainly dream, the last news that shall be heard of men, but there is something more fearful and amazing that comes after it, and that is the Judgment. There is *a Judgment to come*; so *Paul* Preached to *Felix*, at the report whereof he *trembled*, Acts 24. 25. and when is that, but when men are past from time, and have done the work which they were engaged in in this life? while men are in this world, conversant in the body, they are upon probation for Eternity, they are laying in, and making way for their account, and all that they do here bears a proper respect thereunto; for they are *the works which are done in the body*, which must be called to an after reckoning, 2 Cor. 5. 10. hence sinners are said in this time to be *treasuring up unto themselves wrath against the day of wrath*, *Rom.* 2 5. It is evident, that neither good men nor evil men are in this life, openly distinguished in the observable Providences of God, except in some special instances; *love and hatred cannot be known by all that is before them*, *Eccles.* 9. 1. yea, the wise man hath an observation, as if often times the outward face of things look with a

contrary aſpect, Eccleſ. 8. 14 *there be juſt men to whom it happeneth according to the work of the wicked; & there be wicked men to whom it happeneth according to the work of the righteous.* What ſhall we ſay? It is for the preſent a day of patience & forbearance with which God ſees meet to treat men, even the worſt of men withal, in which he lets them alone for a while, & ſuffers them to go on, till they have filled up their meaſure: and though they give him uncountable and very grievous provocations, yet he falls not upon them. But yet he is brought in laughing at them all the while, and we are told the reaſon of it, Pſal 37. 13. *The Lord ſhall laugh at him, for he ſeeth that his day is coming.* Since then men are not called to their reckoning here, it remains that they be ſummoned to it afterwards; inaſmuch as it is certain, that God will ſooner or later manifeſt the glory of his *Holineſs* and *Righteouſneſs*, and make it known that he is the great *Potentate* and Ruler of Angels and men.

III. That there is a particular Judgment to which every man ſhall be called immediately after Death. It is true, the general Judgment is reſerved for the great and laſt day, when, after the whole affair of time is wound up, God will call all reaſonable Creatures to an account; and, having raiſed up their dead bodies to life, and re-united them to their Souls, of which Reſurrection alſo the word of God gives us the aſſurance; he will cite them before his Tribunal,

and

and diſpoſe of them in their whole perſons eternally, which day is peculiarly Celebrated in the Book of God; which, though it alſo follows after mans death, yet it will not be till a long time after a great many have dyed, and ſeen Corruption; and that becauſe there were other Generations to be born, and live, and dy, until the whole *Series* of them, according to the Divine appointment, be conſummated. But there is, beſides this, another more particular one, which paſſeth upon the Soul, on its departure from the body, which, though it be not ſo frequently, or expreſly ſpoken of in the Holy Scriptures, yet there are alſo ſufficient intimations of it there to be found, enough to confirm our faith in the belief of it. This is an indubitable truth, that the Soul of man doth not dy a proper natural Death; nor is it capable of it. The man indeed is ſaid to die, by reaſon of the diſſolution of the bond of Union, and the ſeparation which is thereupon made between the Soul and Body; whereupon the body remains a Carcaſe, and muſt ſuffer Corruption, after which there muſt be a powerful Reſurrection beſtowed on it, in order to its being made capable of ſtanding forth in Judgment. But it is otherwiſe with the Soul; that, in its ſeparate ſtate, ſtill retains its Spiritual and Immortal nature, which it is in no other way able to loſe but by an *Annihilation*; and it is accordingly diſpoſed of preſently to its unchangable ſtate, whether it be of weal or wo. When

Lazarus dyeth, his Soul is forth with carryed by a Convoy of *Angels*, into *Abrahams bosome*, and that is no other but a place and ſtate of actual Felicity. When the Wicked Rich man dyes, the next news that we hear of his Soul is *in Hell*, whether it is carried, and where it is diſpoſed of; and that not only as in a Priſon, but as a place of Execution, where it ſuffers the penalty which its ſin had procured for it: for this reaſon we have him pouting out his doleful complaint, Luk. 16. 24. *I am tormented in this flame.* And we have *Abraham* brought in declaring concerning them both, *Verſe* 25. *He is comforted, and thou art tormented.* When the penitent Thief dyes, he is the ſame day entertained with his Saviour *in Paradiſe*; for ſo Chriſt himſelf promiſed to him, *Luk.* 23. 43. which muſt needs intend a ſtate of actual bleſſedneſs enjoyed in that place. And why was *Paul* in ſuch a ſtrait, and ſo deſirous to *depart? Phil.* 1. 23. it was *to be with Chriſt*, which he ſaith *is beſt of all*; which it could not be, if he did not preſently enter into communion with Chriſt in bleſſedneſs. Now certainly, mens going actually to receive rewards and puniſhments, neceſſarily infers a Judgment that is paſt upon them in order thereunto: for thoſe things are beyond all queſtion, diſpoſed of by God, in the exerciſe of his Government over the Creature, as he is the Judge of all. Beſides, there is ſuch an Indefinite aſſertion uſed by the wiſe man, which amounts to an univerſal, and hath a reſpect to all ſorts of men,

men, Eccl. 12.7. *Then shall the dust return to the earth as it was, and the Spirit shall return to God who gave it.* These two returns are put together as contemporary; and all Souls do not rerurn to God as their Father, to be admitted into his Kingdom, and to dwell with him, and enjoy his favourable presence for ever; that is a priviledge proper only to the Godly, and none shall enjoy it but those whom Christ hath Redeemed and Saved. As for the ungodly, it is said concerning them, Psal. 9.17. *The wicked shall be turned into Hell and all the nations that forget God.* It is therefore to God as a Judge, to be doomed, and disposed of by him, according to his righteous Judgment.

IV. That this is an awfull consideration to men while they live, and peculiarly so to such as are just ready to dy. I may not tarry at these things, to give a distinct and particular account of them, but must only give some briet glances at them: And there are two assertions in this Observation.

1. It carryes awe in it to men while they live, to put them on the greatest Circumspection to themselves in their whole course. If there were no Judgment to come, what need would there be for men to take any care how or after what manner they lead their lives? The *Epecurian Doctrine*, let us drink and drab, let us revel and swagger, and give every sensual lust its freest scope to sa-

tisfie it ſelf, might plead, if not reaſon, yet immunity and ſecurity; for, if there be no after reckoning, there is then no danger at all. But this thought, if it be rightly entertained, will be a ſtrong curb to ſin, and a ſharp ſpur to duty, inasmuch as it muſt needs lead mens thoughts forward to ſuch meditations as theſe: There is certainly a future Judgment, in which I am perſonally concerned. I am Gods Creature, and am placed under the Rule of his ſpecial Government, and intereſted in the Sanctions of his Holy Law. I am now a probationer for that day, and all that I am doing in this world hath a reference unto that, and muſt come under the ſtrict examen of it. Every thought of mine heart, every word of my mouth, and every deed that I do, will then be called over, and tryed whether it be conformable to, or diſſonant from the Rule, by the which I muſt be either acquitted or condemned; and ſo exact will that ſcrutiny be, that not ſo much as one idle word ſhall eſcape it, *Math.* 12. 36. *Every idle word that men ſhall ſpeak, they ſhall give an account thereof in the day of Judgment.* I am under the watchful eye of an all-ſeeing God, who keeps an exact account of all my thoughts, words and deeds, and will certainly in that day, bring them into open light, and ſet them in order before me; *For God will bring every work into Judgment with every ſecret thing*, Eccl. 12. 14. I muſt dy ere long, and there is no poſſible avoidance of it, and then to the Judgment I muſt, whether

whether I will or no; and it will be utterly in vain for me to tire the *Rocks and Mountains, to hide me from the presence of the great God*, or secure me from making my appearance before his Judgment seat. There will need no witness then to be produced to prove any of the matters that shall be alledged against me; since mine own Conscience is an exact register of all things, and will be more than a thousand witnesses. I am, all the time that I am living in this world *laying up treasures* for eternity, and those either of happiness or of misery, which shall be righteously distributed to me, according as I have been laying in in this time. I have a righteous Judge unto whom I must give up my accounts, with whom there is no respect of persons, and a vain thing it is to hope to bribe him; but according as my true state, upon the most exact enquiry, shall be found, so will he take order about me, and pass the sentence either of absolution or condemnation upon me. Now, what a check would such reflections as these are, throughly believed, and fixedly entertained, give to the mad young ster, in the midst of all his frolicks, and mar all the mirth of his greedy lusts, turning it into bitterness? God therefore offers such a memento as this is to these. Eccl. 11. 9. *Rejoyce, O young man, in thy youth, and let thine heart cheer thee in the days of thy youth, and walk in the ways of thine heart, and in the sight of thine eyes: but know thou, that for all these things, God will bring thee into Judgment.*

Yea,

Yea, how would it put every one of us upon greater wariness to our selves, and make a deep impression of that advice upon our hearts, Eph. 5. 15. *See that you walk circumspectly, not as fools but as wise, redeeming the time.* How would it put us upon pondering our way, and living by rule, and make us afraid of rash & precipitant rushing into any action? I am sure that *Job* tells us that he was awed by such a thought as this, and upon it to look well to himself, lest at any time he should expose himself to the danger of not being able to hold up his head, when he should be called to a reckoning, Job 31. 14. *What then shall I do when God riseth up? and when he visiteth, what shall I answer him?*

2. And what an amazing thought must it needs be to them, that are at the point of death, except they have made their peace with God? As for those indeed, who have through grace obtained a pardon & acceptance unto life through the New-Covenant, this thought must needs afford to them all preciousness and desirableness; though still, the very nature of the thing will carry in it an holy awe on their hearts. But as for all others, how can they, at such an hour, look upon it without horror? Truly, the uncertainty of death, and the certainty of the following Judgment, and Reckoning he must then be called to, is enough constantly to fill the sinner with consternation, for that he hath reason every moment to be afraid of the arrest: though careless men, put away the thoughts

thoughts of this, on presumption that *the vision is for many days to come.* But when he perceives that he hath but a very few days or hours to stay; death now stares him in the face, shews him its Warrant, and tells him he must be gone, & there is no hope of a longer reprieve; what a tumult will it raise in him, and what pungent thoughts must it needs fill him withal? can he but reflect and say? my working time is now done, my day in which I have been laying up for another world, is over, and I am now ready to pass into an amazing Eternity; and what an unconceivable change will it make with me? what little hope have I that this Change is like to be unto me for the better, and not for the worse? I have indeed been hard at work in my little time, and pursued my business with great eagerness, but what manner of work is it that I have been doing? I have been laying up of vast treasures, but where is it they are stored? I am now going to appear before my Judge; my naked soul, must, in a very little while be brought before his Tribunal; and he will certainly recompence me, without all partiality, *according to what I have done in the body, whether it be good or evil*: If the life I have led in this world hath been wicked, how can I expect that my *latter end should be peace?* There is an Heaven and an Hell before me, one whereof will receive me as soon as I depart; but into which of these am I like to pass? the Judge will certainly appoint me to one or the other of them. Oh!

where

where ſhall this Immortal Soul of mine lodge, when it ſhall be called out of this mortal body, & ſhall be required at mine hands? Have I any good reaſon to think that it ſhall be received by the bleſſed *Angels*, and lodged in *Abrahams* Boſome; or rather fall into the hands of rageful *Devils*, and be hurried to endleſs *torments*? What manner of life is it that I have been leading in the World? Which way is it that I have been going? Have I choſen that *narrow way that leads unto life*, which there are but *a few that find*? or have I not rejected it, and gone in *the broad way that leads to deſtruction*, in which the multitude of mankind are travelling? what Guilt is it that I have been contracting to my ſelf by tranſgreſſing of Gods Law, and expoſing my ſelf to the curſe of it? how many horrid and amazing ſins do there ſtare me in the face? ſins which I have committed againſt light, againſt conſcience, againſt mercy and patience, againſt counſels and warnings, againſt the ſtrivings of the Spirit of God? and what hope have I that theſe ſins are forgiven, and ſhall not be laid to my charge? what grounds have I to think that my perſon is accepted with God? and what is the foundation on which my hopes are built? have I truly and cordially repented of theſe ſins of mine, or rather hardned mine heart againſt all calls, and counſels, into impenitence? have I really forſaken theſe ſins, never to have to do with them more, or do I *not hold them faſt, and refuſe to let them go*? Have I gotten into Chriſt by a true

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and living faith? Have I made my Judge mine Advocate and my friend? or have I not despised all his offers of Grace and Mercy, and resisted his Spirit who strove with me, and thereby horribly aggravated my Guilt, provoked him to take Vengeance on me? How shall I appear before this Great and Terrible God? must I in that condition be haled to his Judgment Seat? is there nothing to be done yet for my safety, that I may not fall under his terrible indignation, but may meet him with comfort? must I dy, and be judged, and condemned, and damned for ever? Happy, yea thrice happy are they that can say as he, 2 Tim. 4. 7, 8. *I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith, henceforth there is laid up for me a Crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge will give me at that day.* But as for me, what shall I do?

I had chosen this text for a most solemn occasion, which had been designed for this day; which, in pity to an Immortal Soul, and to give Opportunity of a farther space for repentance is deferred. God grant it to obtain the desired end. But I hope, with his blessing, it may prove a seasonable subject, both to the miserable object, and to the whole Congregation. I shall therefore offer at a brief Application of it.

USE. I. For *Information* in three particulars.

1. Learn

1. Learn we hence the folly and madneſs which the generality of man kind do labour of. Are all men riding *poſt* to their diſſolution, and muſt they thence paſs unto Judgment? we muſt then certainly conclude, that *the workers of iniquity have no underſtanding*. If we take a due obſervation of the Lives and Converſations which the moſt of the Children of men are leading, we may plainly read thus much in them, *viz.* That they either believe that they ſhall never dy, or at the leaſt that they have no thoughts or expectations of ever being called to an after reckoning. Doth the *Covetous worlding*, who lays out all his thoughts and induſtry, in laying up his treaſures on earth, and making of that his only care, that by heaping up wealth, and providing himſelf with abundance of the good things of this life, he may have encouragment to ſing that *requiem* to his Soul; Luk. 12. 19. *Soul, thou haſt goods laid up for many years, take thine eaſe, eat, drink and be merry*. Doth he believe that he ſhall ever be parted from his poſſeſſions, and he made to *go to the generation of his fathers, never to ſee light?* Doth the *Profligate Voluptuary*, who ſeek no farther than to immerge himſelf in carnal pleaſures, ſpending of his time among vain and lewd Companions, in drinking, and gaming, and wanton dalliances, always *making proviſion for the fleſh to fulfill the luſts thereof*, ever affect his heart with the thought or belief of *the days of darkneſs which ſhall be many?* Doth the *Profane Swearer*, that is every day rending of Gods bleſſed name with

horrid Oaths and Curſes; the wicked *Sabbath breaker*, who, on deſign, takes holy time, for his moſt grateſull Opportunity of acting his greateſt debaucheries; the *Licentious Young perſon*, who deſpiſeth his Parents, rejects all their faithful counſels, and warnings, rebelliouſly and reſolutely breaks away from under the yoke of Family Government, and gives the reins to his youthful luſts; the *Fornicator* and *Adulterer*, who with greateſt greedineſs *drinks his ſtollen waters, & eats his bread in ſecret*; the *thief*, who *watcheth for the twilight, for the black and dark night*, to commit his outrages in; do theſe, & a great many more that might here have been brought into the number, believe that their *ſins are written with a pen of iron, and the point of a diamond*, and that for all theſe things God will ſhortly call them to a ſevere account? Do *careleſs ſinners*, who trifle away a day of grace, without regard to their Souls and Eternity; who live contented in their ſtate of Unregeneracy, and take no heed to make their peace with God, or ſeek to ſecure an intereſt in Chriſt, and that Salvation which is wrought out by him, by giving *all diligence to make their calling and election ſure*; expect ſhortly to be called to a reckoning for their *Talents* received, & be doomed accordingly? certainly no. And doth not the truth now under conſideration ſay, that all theſe labour of *madneſs in their hearts whiles they live?*

2. Here we ſee one great reaſon why there is ſo much horrid wickedneſs committed in the World,

World, the root of it indeed is in that *Original Sin*, which the hearts of all men are by nature full of, and is a fountain that is always sending forth its bitter streams: and he was never rightly acquainted with his own naughtiness, who is not led by the observation of his actual prevarication to the source from which all do derive: However, there are those restraints under which the Corruption that is within men is held back from breaking forth into prodigious Enormities, which is none of the least of these favours which God indulgeth the children of men withal, but for which all humane Societies must disband, and one, and not the least of these, is the dread of an after reckoning imprinted on the Consciences of men, by which they are kept in awe; when therefore this chain, with which God ties men up, and sets bounds to their violence, is taken off, and men are insensible of any impressions from it, what will not their impetuous lusts make them dare to do? It is the Psalmists observation in Psal. 36. 1. *The transgression of the wicked saith in my heart, that there is no fear of God before his eyes,* and did men think of, or believe the terrors of the Lord, they would surely make them afraid; were the expectation of a future judgment, and a strict reckoning then to be taken of men, of all that ever they have done, realities to them, they would not dare to do as they do. Would the bold Sinner dare to run himself upon the point of the sword of revenging Justice, if he knew that *it is for his life*? Would

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the miſerable children of men dare Heaven with their impious blaſphemies, and all manner of bruitiſh abominations, if they believed that there is a great and holy God, who will bring them before his bar, and *puniſh them with everlaſting deſtruction* for theſe things? No, there is a root of Atheiſm in the bottom of all this; *Pſal.* 14. 1. *The fool hath ſaid in his heart there is no God.* And they that entertain arguings in their minds to put them on calling in queſtion the being and perfections of God, will certainly, on the ſame *Topicks*, conclude that there can be no Judgment. The Prophet therefore is given to underſtand, what it was that nouriſhed the daring abominations of thoſe Jews, Ezek. 9. 9. *The iniquity of the houſe of Iſrael, and Judah is exceeding great, and the city is full of blood, and the land full of perverſeneſs: for they ſay, the Lord hath forſaken the earth, and the Lord ſeeth not.* And they that are arrived to entertaining of ſuch ſentiments as theſe, are no better than *Atheiſts.*

3. This truth tells us who they be that are the truly and only wiſe men: not thoſe that have the worlds verdict for ſuch, and are cryed up among men on this account: not they who have that Character upon them, Jer. 4. 22. *They are wiſe to do evil, but to do good they have no knowledge.* All the skill that men have attained unto, by which they out-do others in being able to get and keep the world; all the wit which men exerciſe in carrying on their courſes of iniquity with greateſt ſecrecy and ſecurity, will be found one day to have been

nothing better than madneſs, whiles they have looked no farther, nor laid in any proviſion for the time to come; and every ſuch man hath the doom already declared againſt him, that *in the end he ſhall be a fool.* He, he is the only wiſe man, who believing the reports of a future account, & looking upon himſelf to be deeply concerned in it, makes it his great ſtudy & buſineſs to be providing for it, and what ever be the changes that go over him in this world, to ſecure *peace in his latter end*, to ſtudy how he may, and endeavour that he may make the Judge his friend & Attourney; to get a ſure claim to the promiſes of the everlaſting Covenant, and all the mercies that are laid up in them; to get now a ſealed pardon of all his ſins, that none of them may riſe up againſt him in that day, and a Juſtification unto life. This is the man who ſhall ſtand in the Judgment, when all others ſhall fall; this is the man who may look death in the face without dread, and entertain joyful thoughts of that great Judgment, which may make all other faces to gather paleneſs & hearts to be filled with aſtoniſhment and horrour: this is he who can look with an eye of faith on his appearance before God, & upon every warning that is given him of the approach of it, can ſay, *Amen, even ſo come Lord Jeſus.* Who ſhall paſs through death to be Judged, and being there accepted before God, and his cauſe found good, ſhall paſs from thence with comfort, and be ſettled in the eternal Kingdom, and live in *the fulneſs of thoſe joys that are*

in Gods presence. And when the *last Trumpet* shall sound, he knows now that his Redeemer is coming to give him perfect Salvation in both Soul & body: whiles they that had so little consideration, as to neglect the things of their peace in the day of it, having laid out and lost all their thoughts, & endeavours upon perishing things, shall howl and lament bitterly, when the Judge shall shut them out of his presence Chamber, and thrust them down into the bottomless pit, where shall be nothing but *wailing, and gnashing of Teeth.*

USE. II.

Let this Doctrine be a watch word for sinners. I am sure that it carries just matter of terrour in it to all such as are open to the Temptations of sin, & ready inconsiderately to entertain them. I am sure that *Paul* made use of this very thing as his monitor, to keep him close to his work, and make him faithful in the discharge of it, 2 Cor. 5 10, 11. *We must all appear,* &c. *knowing therefore the terrours of the Lord, we perswade men.* Let us then be always bearing this in mind, and using of it as a potent argument on our hearts, to excite us to be very careful & fearful, lest we should fall into the neglect of duty by reason of the discouragements which encounter in the way of it, or run our selves into the Commission of any sin, through the allurements which may be offered to us, from the men or the things of the world. Whatsoever arguments flesh and blood, wicked men, or Satan may at any time urge upon us, to intice us in to

sins of Omission or Commission, let us be sure to weigh them in the ballance of the Sanctuary against this great consideration, I must very shortly appear before God, and be called to answer for this then, and what an account shall I give to him? ask, will it bear the tryal of that day of revelation? will it then have the approbation of the Judge? or if it will not, will the benefit which I shall gain by it, in the gratification of carnal concupiscence, make reparation for the damage which I shall sustain by the sentence of Condemnation that will then pass upon me for it, and the fearful miseries which I shall undergo in the execution of that sentence? and if not, think what an ineffable infatuation it will be to give place to it. When you are urged hard, and find your selves beginning to give consent, and address your selves to the Commission of any sin, think seriously, if the hand of Gods anger should now fall upon me, and cut me off, and hasten me to the Judgment, how shall I appear before this dreadful God? what good might such thoughts as these do, if reallized?

USE. III.

Let it be for a word of Warning to us all, to be very careful in making ready to dye well: whiles others are only solicitous in providing that they may rub through, & live according to their hearts desire in this wo ld; let us be perswaded to be peculiarly thoughtful, and practically so, that when we come to dy, we may make a good end.

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And I know no argument that carries more of pungency in it, to ſtimulate us hereunto, than the Truth in hand, if it be entertained with a due ſolemnity. Let us then gather up our thoughts, & fix them frequently here. Think, I am going to the Judgment; think who is to be Judge, & that no other than the all-knowing, heart-ſearching, holy, righteous, and Almighty God. Think, what will be the matter of the Judgment; even all that I have been and done, to a thought; & the moſt ſecret abomination that ever I was guilty of. Think what is the Rule according to which all will proceed, and that will be the exact Law of Juſtice, unleſs I am under Grace, and ſo delivered from the *Dominion* of it. Think what ſhall be the happineſs of thoſe that ſhall then ſtand, and receive the ſentence of abſolution; and what will be the woful infelicity of thoſe that muſt fall. Think how ſin hath expoſed us all to condemnation, & where our only hope and help is, even in *Jeſus Chriſt*, who alone can *deliver us from the wrath to come*. Think, now is the time for us to ſeek and ſecure a part in him, by getting into him by a living faith, & it will be too late for this, when death hath delivered us up to the Judgment. Think what a fearful thing it will be then to be miſtaken, to go out of this life with *hope* that will prove a *a ſpiders web*; to lean on an expectation that will fail and break under us. Think if I make not the more haſt, it may be too late; I ſtand on the very edge and brink of eternity, *the Judge is at the door*. Am I

ready

ready for it? if not, shall I dare to dally in an affair of such infinite concernment one moment? will it not expose me to unconceivable hazard? and when we see any such as have despised Gods Grace, and run themselves desperately into self-destroying sins, and are now ready to be posted away to their fearful account; let any such Object before us, put a suitable solemnity into our hearts, and make us reflect and say, I may go away as soon as or before such an one, and am I in a better readiness? have I done any thing more to lay in for a comfortable trial? and let this drive you to him who is *the God of all Grace*, to ask of him, with the most intense importunity, to work you up unto a *meetness* for this Appearance.

And now give me leave to add one word of advice to the poor Condemned Creature who is under a Sentence of Death: Who if God had not put more pitty into the hearts of her pious & compassionate *Judges*, than she had for her own Soul, had now been hearing the last Sermon that ever should have been Preached in her ears; and the Lord grant that this respite given you, may turn to the account of your Salvation; else know it, it will add a fearful Item to your astonishing account. Oh that I might now have had the occasion and encouragement to have spoken a consolatory word, to a broken heart, wounded to death under the *Arrows of the Almighty*, and sensible of her miserable condition, humbly asking after the hopes of Salvation: the Lord knows how my heart would have rejoyced, might it have been so. But since it

it must be otherwise, I pray God that his *Terrors may make you afraid*, and drive you yet, before all hopes of mercy be past and gone, in deepest sense of your own unworthiness, to take Sanctuary in the *Blood of Christ*, where only, how much soever you have despised it, you can obtain safety. Your Humane Judge hath told you that you must Dy, and that very quickly; and you have no hope that this Sentence will be reversed. But I am now to Cite you, in the name of God, to a more dreadful Judgment upon that; as soon as ever you are dead, you must be called to it, and what preparation have you made? what have you been doing in order to it? alas! a fearful deal; you are but a young Creature, but ah! an old sinner, grown ripe, and must be cut down before you have seen twenty years in this world. What a fearful Indictment hath the All-seeing God ready drawn up against you? what uncountable bloody Items is it filled up withal? I have already given you the most solemn advice, in the name of God, about these things on the last Sabbath, and all the encouragement to seek for a pardon, which the Word of God affords; and many of Gods faithful Servants have been in publick or private, or both, solemn and serious in their applications to you; and what do you now mean to do? are you resolved to harden your neck, till you be remedilesly destroyed? will you add Impenitency to Iniquity, & trample on the precious *Blood of Christ*, that hath been and is offered to you? do you think to plead with God, as you have done with men, *that you are guilty of* Murder *only according to mans Law, and not his*! Shall the all-knowing God so be put off? do you hope that your lies, which men have detected you of, not only before, but at your Trial, and since your Condemnation, will shelter you from the Vengeance of that God who is a *Witness*; and hath said, Rev. 21. 8. *That all Liars shall have their part*

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in the Lake which burns with fire and brimstone? Do you think that your abominable Whoredom committed in the Prison, & under the apprehension of being quickly to be thrust out of the World as an Execration, will help forward your repentance, or make your account more easie? is this the provision that you are making for your standing before God? let all that hear me this day take notice and tremble, and learn by this amazing instance, what sin persisted in, under calls, and counsels, & warnings will expose them to, & how righteous a thing it is with God, to leave them up to a seared conscience, *Who would not be instructed*. Well, I know that the blood of Christ can wash away this guilt too, and the Soveraign Grace of God can yet discover it self, and my hearts desire and prayer to God in this behalf continually is, that it may be so: and let every soul that is affected with the misery of this poor Creature, lift up a prayer in this regard. But know it, that if you appear before your Judge under the guilt of these *Crimson* and *Scarlet* Sins, a few days more will fix you in Eternal Miseries, and because you have despised mercy in the day of it, you shall have Judgment without mercy; *and can your heart endure*, to be made the Subject of Gods *Fiery Indignation*, and feel the Impressions of his Fury in *Everlasting Burnings*? Hasten then, the *Avenger of Blood* is just ready to give you the fatal stroak, and if you do not with all speed *get into the City of Refuge*, you are gone for ever. *The Lord give you an ear to hear, and heart to consider*, lest this word also rise up in the Judgment against you, and encrease your Eternal Flames.

FINIS.